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ABSTRACT

To discover what part parent impartiality might play in creating a climate in which each individual child can prosper, 198 college students from a large Midwestern urban university were questioned about their perceptions of their parents' behavior during the time that they were growing up. The first section of the survey consisted of 50 questions addressing the parenting behaviors of the subject's father and mother in interactions with the subject. Subjects were asked to rate their parents on a five-point scale from "never" to "always" for such behaviors as "valued me as a person" and "insisted I obey." The second section was directed at comparisons of parental behavior toward the subject and the subject's siblings. Subjects were asked to indicate which child each parent would choose as "favorite," which as "least favorite," and if they were happy with their place in the family. Responses showed that 78% of the subjects reported parental favorites. The subjects' own status with their parents (favorite, least favorite, not chosen, parents have no favorites) was used to determine whether there was any difference in the scoring of parental behavior. An analysis of variance for each item in the survey showed significant differences between groups on 80% of the items. Subjects who reported that their parents had no favorites gave parents the highest scores for positive nurturing behavior and the lowest scores on hostile or controlling behavior items. The opposite was true for the "least favorites." (Author/HOD)

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Implications of Perceived Parental Treatment of Self and Siblings by Adult Children

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Abstract

Adult children were questioned about their perceptions of their parents behavior during the time that they were growing up and if their parents had favorites among the children in the family. Seventy-eight percent of the subjects reported parental favorites. The subjects' own status with their parents (i.e., favorite, least favorite, not chosen, parents have not favorites) was used to determine whether there was any difference in the scoring of parental behavior. An analysis of variance for each item in the survey showed significant differences between groups on 80% of the items. Subjects who reported that their parents had no favorites gave parents the highest scores for positive nurturing behavior and the lowest scores on hostile or controlling behavior items. The opposite was true for the "least favorites.

Parental impartiality toward children is a social prescription that supposedly governs and guides child rearing practices. The assumption is that parents strive to provide fair and equal treatment for each child. The absence of favoritism on the part of a parent is thought to nurture harmonious relationships by ensuring equal attachments and fair treatment, and by mitigating rivalry (Smith, M.B., 1956). A great many parents undoubtedly attempt to and succeed in treating their children impartially, thus, according to theory, creating a climate in which each individual child may prosper. It seems plausible, however, that some parents unwittingly or even intentionally choose not to be impartial (Ross et al., 1982). While the fact that parents cannot and do not treat each child exactly alike does not imply harmful effect, it would seem a useful area to explore. There remain unanswered questions about the outcomes of the differential treatment of children in a family by the parents.

For instance, equal treatment is said to mitigate rivalry, but the role of the parent in promoting rivalry is generally unresolved (Schachter, 1982). The literature on sibling rivalry implies that the rivalry is, for the most part, generated among and between children seeking parental rewards and competitive social evaluation (Pfouts, 1976; Katz, 1981). A case in point is the Adlerian conceptualization of sibling rivalry which has been interpreted as resulting from an older child being "dethroned" by the birth of a younger child (Ansbacher et al., 1956). Such discussion and study are valuable. It would seem of equal value, however, to discover what part the parent(s) might play in enhancing or reducing the child's competition with a sibling or siblings for emotional resources within the family constellation.

Sullivan (1953) maintained that individuals seek both satisfaction and security in interpersonal relationships. The child's achievement of these goals is contingent upon not only gaining parental approval but also avoiding parental disapproval. The perception by the child of the presence or absence of parental partiality, therefore, suggests important implications for the parent-child relationship. Children's perception of where they rank in their parents' affections or acceptance may affect their interpretation of their parents' behavior. Those who believe themselves to a favorite child (positive favoritism) may interpret this situation as active approval and minimized disapproval. Children who perceive themselves as being treated in an impartial or fair manner relative to their sibling(s) (absence of favoritism)

may attribute to their parents passive approval and minimized disapproval. Either of these relationships could be viewed as providing a source of satisfaction and security. However, children who perceive themselves as the least favorites (negative favoritism) may interpret their parents' behavior as rejecting, thus reducing their satisfaction and security as a member of the family constellation.

Theoretical discussion of possibilities such as these or conceivable effects inside and outside of the family setting is meager and in some cases may have been deliberately avoided. Dreikurs and Soltz (1967) in their discussion of the family constellation acknowledge differences in parental treatment of children and then sanction such discrepancies by suggesting that equal treatment does not necessarily have to be synonymous with identical treatment. They do not explain how to achieve this ideal. They do not bother to consider either the consequences of the success or failure of their prescription, or even whether parents and children agree on just what equal-but- not-identical treatment is.

Reports on the manifestation of favoritism by parents are rare, but may be found (Bossard et al., 1956; Lasco, 1954; Hoffman et al., 1966). A few studies in gerontology focus on attachments between aged parent(s) and favored children (e.g., Aldous et al., 1985). A recent investigation of sibling relationships among young children reported 20% of the subjects indicating parent partiality (Furman et al., 1985). But there is little that directly addresses the existence of favoritism or its effect on development and family relationships.

Ethical, methodological, even cultural considerations may account for the lack of theoretical consideration of favoritism and the resulting paucity of research on parental partiality. Family researchers deal with unspoken, sometimes unconscious, taboos in their inquiries. Research on an aspect of the parent-child relationship such as favoritism, which has the goal of revealing acknowledged or unacknowledged bias, understandably is a sensitive issue. Children have shown themselves to be reluctant to talk about the matter (Furman et al., 1985). Further, it is not clear that all parents would consent to an investigation into the existence of favoritism. Seeking children's ratings or evaluations of their parents' behavior and performance could effect the parent-child relationship with unforeseen or even harmful consequences.

For these reasons, the present study addressed the problem as a

retrospective survey. Adult children were questioned about their perceptions of parental behavior and parental favoritism while they were growing up. For the purposes of the study, favoritism was conceptualized in the sense of meaning "unfair partiality." Thus, favoritism contained the possibility of positive attribution ("being the favorite") or negative attribution (being the "least favorite"). It was hypothesized that there would be reports of favoritism in addition to reports of impartiality. It was further hypothesized that adult children's attribution of parental favoritism would be reflected in evaluations of parenting patterns and behaviors.

METHODS

Subjects

The subjects of the present study were 198 students from three different schools within a large Midwestern urban university. Most were undergraduates, about ten percent identified themselves as graduate students. Only three survey respondents were members of single-child families. The data from these three cases were not included in the present statistical analysis. The total sample population for this analysis was 195.

Subjects ranged in age from 19 to 52 years. Two-thirds of all respondents were 25 years or younger (see Table 1). There were nine percent more women than men in the sample (89 males, 108 females). Three-fourths of the subjects came from intact families, and about 40% were still living with one or both parents (see Table 2). The number of children in subjects' families ranged from two to fifteen. There were four or more children in 54% of the respondents' families. Twenty-four percent of the subjects were first born children, while 32% were youngest children (see Table 2).

Materials and Procedures

The first section of the survey consisted of fifty questions addressing the parenting behaviors of the subject's father and mother in interactions with the subject. Since the father-child subsystem within family constellations has been shown to be qualitatively different from the mother-child subsystem, separate scores were collected for each parent (Minuchin, 1985). Subjects were asked to rate their parents on a five point scale from "Never" to "Always" for such behaviors as "valued me as a person" and "insisted I obey". The statements, meant to measure perceptions of parental style and attitude, were created around issues reported in the

parenting literature to be contributing to emotionally well-adjusted children harmonious family structure and the productive functioning of the family unit.

Because favoritism is a sensitive issue and research on families generally is characterized by a reluctance in participants to disclose less than ideal relationships (Niemi, 1974), the second section of the survey was prefaced by a statement sanctioning less desirable responses. Ten questions were directed at comparisons of parental behavior toward the subject and the subject's siblings. Subjects were also asked to indicate which child each parent would choose as "favorite", which as "least favorite" and if they (the subjects) were happy with their place in the family.

Additional information was solicited about sociological characteristics for purposes of sample population description (e.g., age, sex, schooling, parent marital status, number of children in family, birth order). The questionnaire was modified after pre-testing.

The questionnaire took approximately 25 minutes to complete. One group of thirteen students answered the survey questions a second time, two weeks after the initial adminsitration of the form. The scores for this group were tested for reliability. The stability coeffficient for the father scores was .91, for the mother scores it was .76. There are numerous factors that impinge upon the retest reliability for a survey such as this (Niemi, 1974; Moser, 1971). Nevertheless, although the retest population is small, the stability coefficients are of adequate size and make a modest statement about the reliability of the instrument.

RESULTS

Analysis

The first hypothesis, that favoritism would be reported, required a selection of descriptive statistics. The second area of investigation concerned whether the perception of favoritism might be related to the perception of parenting behavior. It was hypothesized that those who perceived favoritism in their parent(s) would make quantitatively different judgment about their parents' behavior from those who perceived their parents as impartial. Also, important distinctions in parent scores might be discovered depending upon whether or not subjects reporting favoritism thought they were "favorites", "least favorites" or "not chosen". Therefore, for purposes of analysis the subjects were divided into four groups: those who considered themselves favorites, those who considered themselves least

favorites, those who thought their parent had preferences but would not choose them and those who thought their parents completely impartial. It was expected that subjects within each of the groups would tend to judge their parents differently from subjects in the other groups and that the difference would translate to a significant difference in mean scores for parents across groups.

There were 49 subjects in the "least favorite" group, 49 in the "not me" group, 44 in the "impartial" group and 52 in the "favorite group. In order to compare the means of the groups, each question was tested across the groups with a one-way Anova with SPSS-X package. The Anova procedure was considered relatively safe even though the group sizes were not equal. First, this is only an exploratory study. Secondly, as Kerlinger (1973) points out, even though the assumptions are violated, the t and F tests will be robust, and it is probably safer and more effective to use parametric tests than nonparametric tests.

The total mother score or father score was not used for analysis since a variety of parent-child interaction behaviors were addressed by the survey and some of the questions necessarily described behavior that contradicted the behavior described in other questions. At a result, it could be expected that such opposing items would cancel each other's contributions to the total outcome making total score comparisons meaningless.

For questions which showed significant differences, treatment magnitudes were calculated and post hoc comparisons were performed to determine the character of the differences using the harmonic mean and the Tukey (1977) pairwise method.

Results

Hypothesis 1 that the perception of favoritism exists and is maintained over time was sustained for the survey population. Of the students sampled, 152 (78%) reported some kind of parental favoritism. One hundred and one (52%) subjects named themselves as a "favorite" or "least favorite" of their mothers or fathers. Among those subjects who thought themselves singled out in this way by their parents, 49 were over 26 years of age (that represents 65% of those in the sample who were over 26 years of age). There were 15 respondents over 35 years of age. Twelve of these 15 persons identified themselves as a "favorite" or "least favorite" of one of their parents. Apparently, the perception or impression of favoritism on the part of a parent

remains vivid well past adolescence.

Parental impartiality, that is, no report of favorite or least favorite for either parent within a family, was present in surveys of 42 (22%) of the respondents.

In considering the reports of favoritism according to birth order of the subject, the responses distributed participants across categories. In the parenting literature parents have been described as choosing first and last children as favorites (Bossard & Boll, 1956), but the survey evidence is that children may not entirely agree. Although a majority of first born and last born thought themselves singled out by their parents, so did a majority of the middle children. Of the first born, 17 named themselves as favorites, 14 as not chosen and 14 as least favorites. Twenty middle children named themselves as favorites, and of those who were youngest in their families, 15 said they were favorites, 29 said they were not chosen and 18 said they were least favorites (see Table 3 for a breakdown of favoritism by birth order, sex age and number of children in the family).

Whatever their favoritism status, almost 77% (150) subjects reported being happy with their place in their family. Interestingly, only 41 subjects reported being discontent with their place in their family. Fifteen females and eight males who categorized themselves as "least favorite" claimed to be happy with their place in their families. Three males and three females who described themselves as "favorites" reported dissatisfaction with their place. Respondents reporting no favorites for either parent were most satisfied (see Table 3). These results seem to provide some support for equal treatment by parents, but also, contrary to psychoanalytic theory, seem to indicate that some children may be content being "least favorite" and some who consider themselves "favorite" may not find this status a source of satisfaction or security.

Hypothesis 2 that the means of the question scores for both the father scale and the mother scale would be significantly different across the favoritism groups was partially sustained. The univariate analysis of variance procedures performed on every set of question scores yielded 41 sets of the father scores which, at a probability level of .1 showed significant differences across groups (see Table 4). At the same level 46 items on the mother scale showed significant differences (Table 4). Only two of the ten survey items addressing a comparison of parental treatment of sibling and self showed significant difference in mean scores across groups.

The relative treatment magnitudes on questions with significant F ratios at the .05 probability level in the Anova test for favoritism were calculated using the omega squared (^{2}) index. The explained variances described, for the most part, what Cohen (1977) categorizes as medium effects (i.e., about 6%) with several values close to or reaching large effect (i.e., 15%).

Post hoc comparisons of the mean group scores on questions showing significant effects for favoritism revealed definite trends for some question clusters (see Table 5). Subjects who had reported impartial parents gave the highest scores on items describing positive nurturing behavior and the lowest scores on controlling or hostile behavior items. The opposite was true of subjects who reported being "least favorites". Subjects who named themselves as parental "favorites" and who might have been expected to give their parents higher scores on positive items than other groups, only scored their parents the highest on item 55, "considered me most dependable". On many items, there was no significant difference between the scoring by the "favorites" and the scoring by the "not me's".

These findings are consistent with the earlier reported results that showed the group with "impartial" parents reporting the most satisfaction with their place in the family and the group considering themselves the least favored by their parents being least satisfied. It also underlines the ambivalence of the "favorite" status, implying that the position may entail more responsibility than benefit in the eyes of the favored child.

DISCUSSION

The perception that favoritism exists within family constellations was indicated by 78% of the subjects of this study. This finding is an imposing one and suggests that the partiality/impartiality dimension may offer a promising approach in the attempt to understand interactions within families.

Factors which contribute to the formation and perception of favoritism appear to be both complex and intermeshed. Favoritism does not seem to be directly related to rivalry among siblings. The survey showed few significant differences among the groups on the sibling comparison questions. It is unclear what relation favoritism may have to birth order, number of children in the family or the child's sex. What the perception of favoritism does seem to be related to is children's perception of their relationship to their parents.

Whether or not it is a reflection of reality, those who thought their

parents "impartial" gave their parents the highest ratings for warmth, affection and acceptance. It could be that subjects who reported their parents were impartial are really reporting that they did not feel emotionally deprived. Those subjects who named themselves as "least favorites" rated their parents more hostile, dominating, and uncaring then other groups. "Least favorite" does not superficially appear to be a desirable status. On the other hand, 23 "least favorites" declared themselves happy with their place in their families. This may imply that individual family members attach quite different values to favoritism designations.

The favorite child status appears to both a source of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Being the "favorite" may not always be the most desirable position in the family constellation. Six "favorites declared themselves dissatisfied with their place in their family.

Investigation is needed to determine what conditions govern the desirability or undesirability of the favoritism status; how the status comes about and whether it is bestowed by the parents, chosen by the child, or a function of family myth; whether the perception of favoritism is a reality or mistaken impressions upon which family members disagree; if it exists, how it is manifested; whether the perception or existence of favoritism affects relationships among siblings; whether it is affected by sex of the child or which parent it is that favors the child; and whether the study of favoritism can help uncover and explain the most critically influential parental behaviors. It may be that ideas about and perceptions of favoritism evolve over time, since a high percentage of the survey subjects over 35 categorized themselves as either "favorite or "least favorite". It may be that the importance of the status evolves over time as well.

The present study reveals that favoritism is a dimension that influences family interaction. As such, it has not been the object of study by more than a few social scientists. Yet, it has been noted that the investigation of this factor may lead to a more complete understanding of the socialization process within families, particularly with reference to the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships (Brim, 1968). In terms of parent-child reciprocity (based on the bidirectional model), the study of favoritism may provide insight into what promotes the development of a healthy psychosocial relationship between parents and their children.

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Table 1.

DESCRIPTIONS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Sex:

	Count	Percentage
males	88	45%
females	106	54%
	1 (missing)	1%
total	195	100%

Age:

	Count	Percentage
19 to 25	120	61%
26 to 35	60	31%
36 & up	15	8%
total	195	100%

Table 2.

FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Family Size:

	Count	Percentage
2 or 3 children	88	45%
4 or 5 children	69	35%
6 to 15	38	20%
total	195	100%

Subject's Position in Family:

	Count	Percentage
first born	46	24%
middle children	87	44%
youngest children	62	32%
total	195	100%

Family Situations:

	Count	Percentage
Both parents living	173	87%
Parents still married	154	78%
Live with parents	76	38%
Live with spouses or children	48	24%
Live alone	43	22%

Table 3.

QUANTITY AND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS
BY FAVORITISM CATEGORY

MALES:

	FAVORITES	IMPARTIAL	NOT ME	LEAST FAVORITE	
Criteria:					
1st born	6	1	3	8	
Middle	14	6	4	6	[Birth Order]
Last born	8	7	6	3	
2 or 3	15	10	7	9	
4 or 5	12	5	7	3	[No. Children
6 or more	1	5	9	4	in Family]
19 to 25	14	9	17	6	
26 to 35	10	10	5	9	[Age]
36 or older	4	1	1	1	
Happy w/ place	25	17	18	8	
Dissatistfied	3	2	5	6	

FEMALES:

	FAVORITES	IMPARTIAL	NOT ME	LEAST FAVORITE	
Criteria:					
1st born	11	6	4	6	
Middle	6	10	13	12	[Birth Order]
Last born	7	5	11	15	
2 or 3	10	9	8	18	
4 or 5	10	6	16	10	[No. Children
6 or more	4	6	4	5	in Family]
19 to 25	17	17	24	15	
26 to 35	5	3	4	13	[Age]
36 and older	2	1	0	5	
Happy w/ place	20	20	25	15	
Dissatisfied	3	1	3	18	

Table 4.

MEAN SCORES, F RATIOS AND TREATMENT MAGNITUDES[1]

Group sizes:

Least favorites	= 49
Not me	= 51
Impartial Parents	= 42
Favorites	= 52
N	=195

Questions	Father scale			Mother scale		
	Ave. Mean	F Ratio	T.Mag.	Ave. Mean	F Ratio	T.Mag.
1.Valued me as a person	2.91	5.84*	.07	3.29	6.26*	.08
2.Readily admitted mistakes	1.88	4.11*	.05	2.42	3.43*	.04
3.Set unilateral standards	2.62	.73		2.39	.216	
4.Cared about my feelings	2.52	11.09*	.14	3.15	8.86*	.11
5.Appreciated my contrib.	2.61	9.58*	.12	3.07	5.79*	.07
6.Intimidated me	2.01	5.66*	.07	1.29	4.29*	.05
7.Approved of my behavior	2.59	4.75*	.06	2.70	7.89*	.10
8.Allowed me to make decis.	2.65	7.88*	.10	2.69	6.01*	.08
9.Insisted on being right	2.20	4.39*	.05	1.88	4.05*	.05
10.Easy to communicate with	1.92	6.70*	.09	2.71	9.23*	.12
11.Consoling when I had troubles	2.15	12.23*	.15	2.99	7.87*	.10
12.Genuinely concerned about me	3.13	11.31*	.14	3.56	5.82*	.07
13.Overly crit.of my actions	1.72	3.10*	.04	1.70	6.42	.08
14.Was disagreeable	1.81	6.15*	.08	1.66	4.29*	.05
15.Spoiled me	1.63	.68		1.81	.69	
16.Was domineering	2.07	2.79*	.03	1.78	2.70*	.03
17.Was easy going	2.26	2.51**		2.34	2.19**	
18.Insisted on last word	2.31	1.50		2.21	4.65*	.06
19.Was encouraging	2.67	4.88*	.06	3.05	6.55*	.08
20.Resented my success	.48	1.54		.53	1.82	
21.Was fair	2.75	9.31*	.12	2.91	10.44*	.13
22.Was flexible	2.97	6.18*	.08	2.60	4.86*	.06
23.Played with me	1.92	1.97		2.22	1.12	
24.Was fun	2.30	3.81*	.05	2.64	5.55*	.07
25.Was generous	2.94	1.30		3.16	1.45*	
26.Was helpful	2.79	5.75*	.07	3.19	3.97*	.05
27.Was hostile and mean	.91	5.48*	.07	.63	3.41*	.04
28.Interested in what I was doing	2.65	5.79*	.07	3.05	4.77*	.06
29.Invaded my privacy	1.95	1.40		1.45	5.12*	.06
30.Was kind	2.66	4.21	.05	3.02	5.93*	.08
31.Thought me disobedient	1.45	5.53*	.07	1.54	6.15*	.08
32.Was lenient	2.05	.38		2.36	.94	
33.Openly loving and affect.	1.68	2.01		2.48	2.94*	.03
34.Was impatient	1.92	1.20		1.69	1.95	
35.Positive influence	2.81	8.89*	.11	2.90	3.81*	.05
36.Was reasonable	2.62	6.89*	.09	2.73	4.96*	.06
37.Distant and aloof	1.46	3.33*	.04	.91	4.08*	.05
38.Nagged me	1.63	1.68		2.24	1.90	

Questions	Father scale Ave. Mean	F Ratio	T.Mag.	Mother scale Ave. Mean	F Ratio	T.Mag.
39.Was antagonistic	1.16	.67		1.09	1.79	
40.Set excessive restrictions on my actions	1.09	.57		1.32	2.51**	
41.Willing to renegotiate the house rules	1.78	2.42**		2.08	2.16**	
42.Insisted I obey	2.77	.20		2.71	.53	
43.Supportive of what I wanted	2.58	6.43*	.08	2.83	6.02*	.08
44.Proud of my achievements	3.19	7.70*	.10	3.47	6.62*	.09
45.Laid guilt trips on me	1.33	3.23*	.04	1.87	4.14*	.05
46.Caused me to feel neglected	1.04	5.94*	.08	.84	3.78*	.05
47.Reminded me of sacrifices being made for me	1.36	2.58**		1.64	5.53*	.07
48.Caused me to feel resentful	1.29	7.76*	.10	1.26	7.74*	.10
49.Had unrealistic expectations concerning me	1.10	4.56*	.06	1.02	3.16*	.04
50.Came to my defense	2.51	3.36*	.04	2.84	3.19*	.04
SIBLING COMPARISONS						
51.Encouraged to be close to siblings	2.40	1.06		2.97	1.84	
52.Allowed me more privilege	1.59	1.49		1.69	2.47**	
53.Expected less of me	.80	1.28		.84	1.16	
54.Permitted me to compete with siblings	2.09	1.05		1.96	.49	
55.Considered me most dependable	2.04	5.58*	.07	2.16	5.27*	.07
56.Devoted more attention to me than siblings	1.49	2.05		1.60	1.94	
57.More extravagant with me than siblings	1.28	2.58**		1.39	2.55**	
58.Helped me more	1.23	2.55**		1.42	2.22**	
59.Compared me unfavorably with my siblings	.86	10.00*	.13	.81	6.54*	.08
60.Allowed me to get away with more than siblings	1.36	3.61*	.04	1.39	5.06*	.06

* = p<.05
** = p<.1
1: magnitudes of .15 are considered large effects, .06 is a medium effect

Table 5.
RANKING OF FAVORITISM GROUPS ACCORDING
TO MEAN PARENT SCORES ON SURVEY ITEMS

Scale	Survey Items+	Item Description	Ranking*
Father	1,2[ab],4,5,10,11,19,21,22[b], 24,28[b],30a,35,43,44,50[ab]	affectionate,accepting	1,2,4,3
Mother	1[a],2[a],5,7[ab],11[a],12[a],19,22[a],	affection accepting	1,2,4,3
Father	9[a],13,14,37[b],45,46[b],48,49	authoritarian controlling	3,4,2,1
Mother	9,14,18[a],31,49,59	authoritarian,controlling	3,4,2,1
Father	8[a],12[a],26[a],36	caring,reasonable	1,4,2,3
Mother	4[a],8,10a,21,24,26,36,44[a]	caring,reasonable	1,4,2,3
Father	6,16[c],27[a],59	intimidating,hostile	3,2,4,1
Mother	6,13[a],16,27,29[a],45[a],47,48[a]	hostile,manipulating	3,2,4,1
Father	7[b],55	approved my behavior & considered me dependable	1,2,3,4
Mother	28[b],50[bd]	interested in what I was doing and came to my defense	1,2,3,4

+ - Ad hoc pairwise comparisons using the Tukey HSD procedure were performed on survey items. Those which were not significantly different at the .05 level are flagged as follows:
  - a - groups 2 & 4
  - b - groups 3 & 4
  - c - groups 4 & 1
  - d - groups 2 & 3

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* - This column lists the order of mean scores from lowest to highest for the following groups:
  - 1 - subject reports self as least favorite
  - 2 - parents reported to have favorite, but subject is not a favorite
  - 3 - parents are reported to be impartial
  - 4 - subject reports self as favorite